

E

312

.63

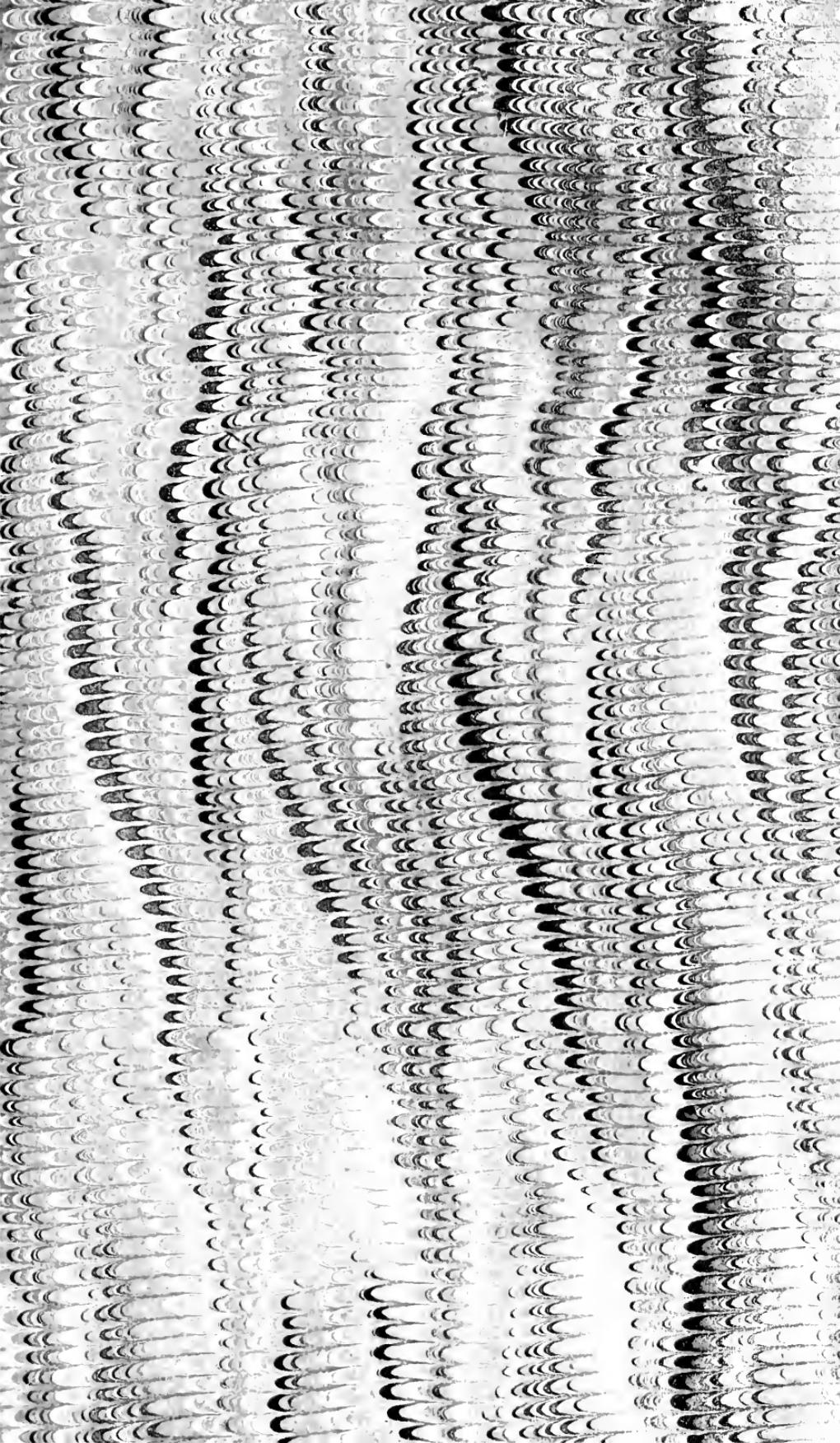
P58

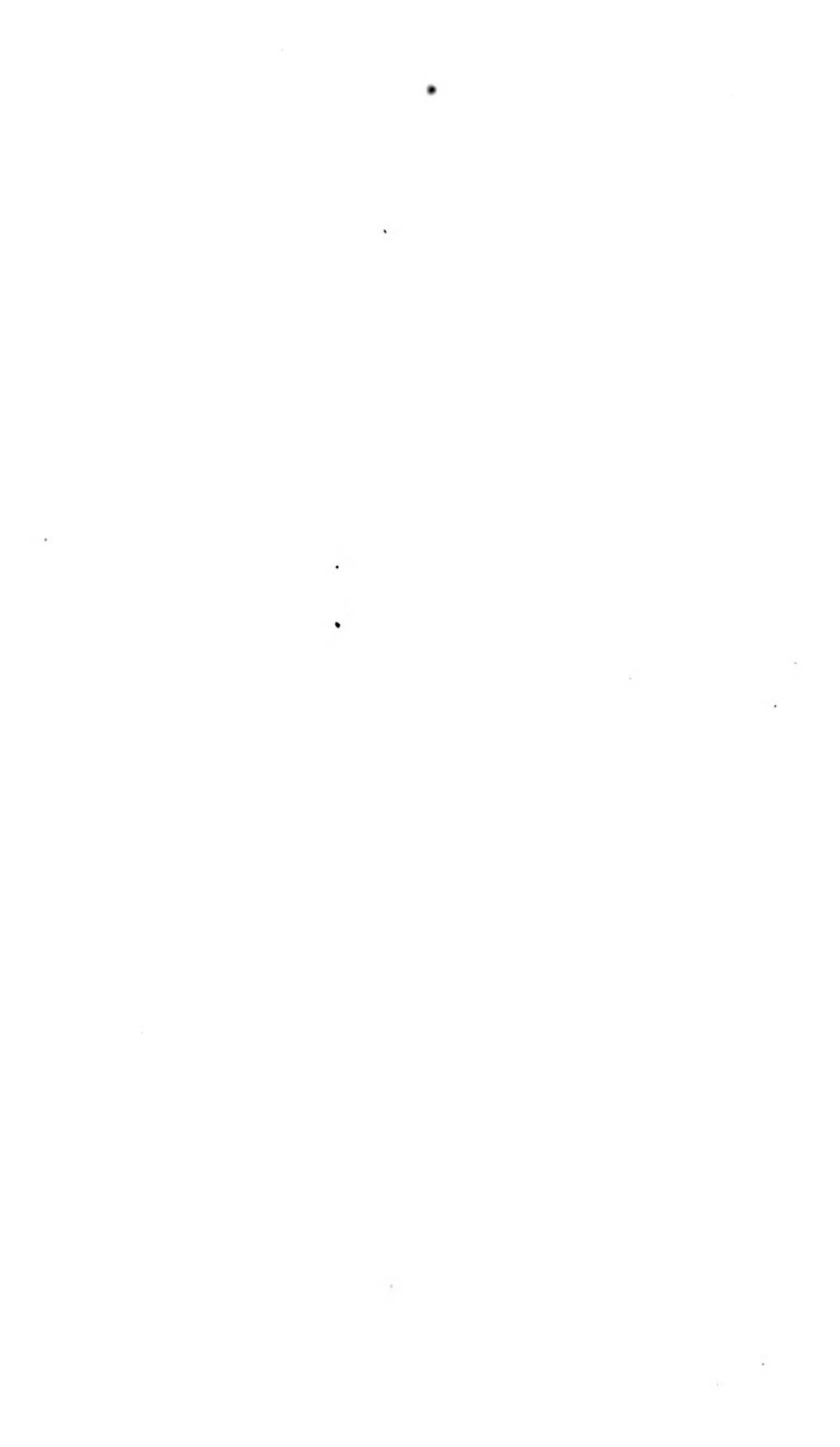
Washington

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

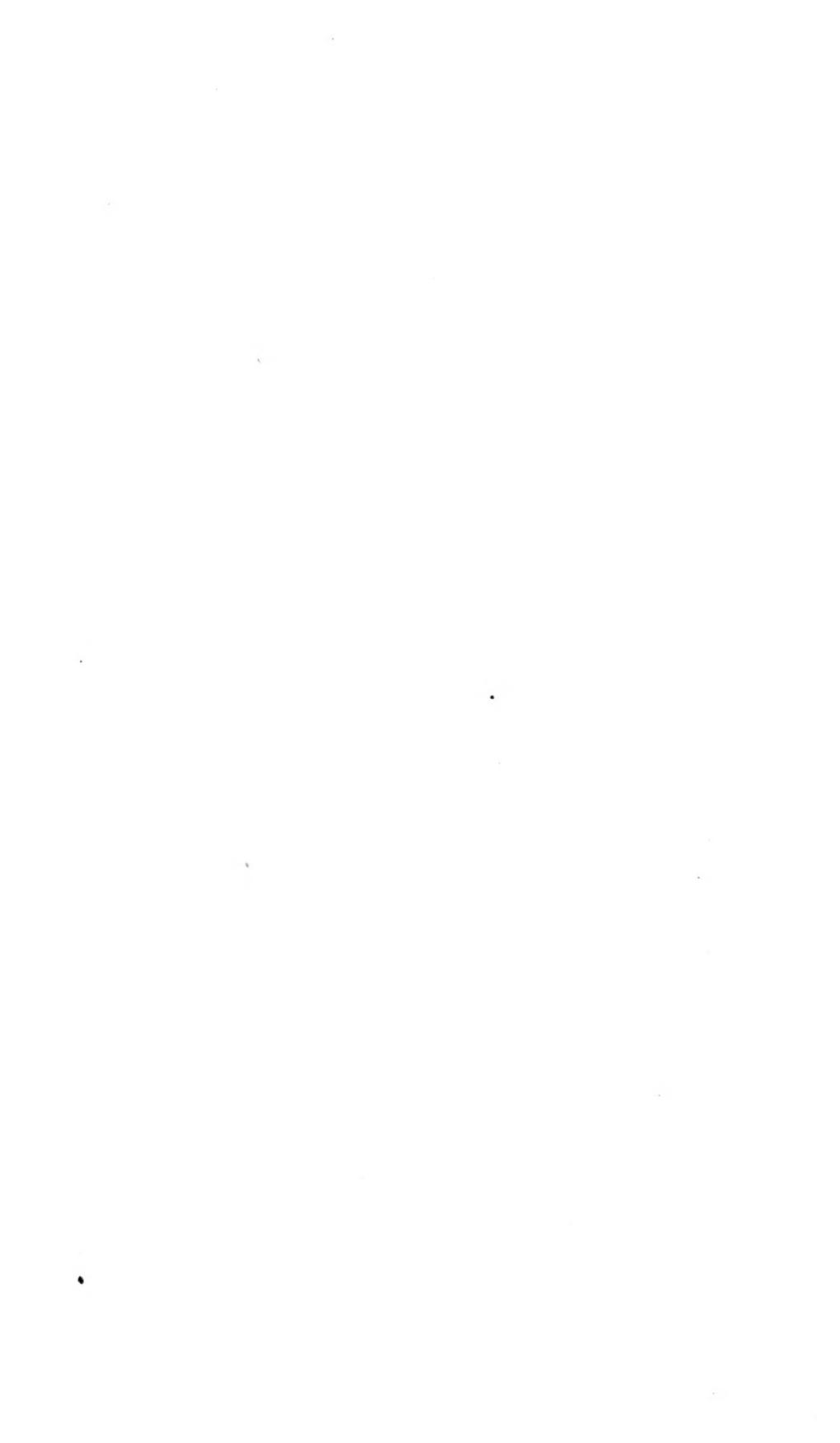
Aug 12
1863
PSS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA











A D D R E S S.

Subject:

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

For February 22, 1867.

B Y

Col. J. C. PICKETT.
II

WASHINGTON:
PRINTED BY JOHN T. BURCH.
1867.

E 312
.63
P 58

WASHINGTON, March 7, 1867.

DEAR SIR :

We have the honor, in behalf of the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia, to request that you will furnish us with a copy of your interesting and patriotic address, delivered before the Society on the 22d ultimo, for publication.

With great respect,

We are your obedient servants,

JOHN B. BLAKE,

A. McDONALD DAVIS,

JOHN CARROLL BRENT,

Committee of Arrangements.

COL. J. C. PICKETT,

Present.

WASHINGTON, March 8, 1867.

GENTLEMEN :

I have received your note of yesterday, in which you request me to furnish, for publication, a copy of the Address delivered before the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia, on the 22d ultimo. In compliance with your request, I inclose herewith a copy of the Address.

With the highest respect and regard,

Your obedient servant,

J. C. PICKETT.

DR. JOHN B. BLAKE,

DR. A. McD. DAVIS,

JOHN CARROLL BRENT, Esq.,

Committee of Arrangements.



A D D R E S S.

FELLOW-CITIZENS :—

It is a very natural, and not either an illiberal or an idle curiosity, but one inherent apparently in the minds of individuals and of communities, to endeavor to ascertain the origin, pedigree, and important actions of illustrious men. Among such men, General George Washington occupies a conspicuous place, not only in his own country, but in all the countries of Christendom, and beyond. During the last eighty years, inquiries and researches have been made, and not unsuccessfully, respecting the Washington family; and it is a little singular that these researches were commenced in England and by a British subject. In the year 1792, a letter was addressed to General Washington, by Sir Isaac Heard, in London, who held the heraldic office of Garter King-at-Arms, desiring information relating to the Washington family. This the General gave, although it did not amount to much, he confessing that it was a subject to which he “had paid very little attention,” notwithstanding the lustre he had recently shed upon that family, which had been a most respectable one for five or six centuries; of the class called *gentry* in England. In this country, thanks to our institutions, we have but one class—the people.

It appears that the founder of the Washington family, the ancestor of all of that name in America at least, was William de Hertburn, who lived in the 12th century. He acquired by purchase, in 1183, the manor and village of Wessyngton, in the diocese of Durham. Wessyngton was, it may be supposed, its original name. William was then

a Norman and not an English name, and this may favor the hypothesis, that his ancestor came into England with the Conqueror, in 1066. Hertburn dropped his own name, and assumed that of William De Wessyngton. Wessyngton is said to signify *smiling water*. Surnames were then rare or unknown, as they now exist, and the owners and lords of manors usually took that of the manor. The seigniorial and proprietary prefix *de* was dropped, and Wessyngton finally became Washington ; the process of transmutation being about this : De Wessyngton, Wessyngton, Wessington, Weshington, Wassington, Waashington, Washington. It has been stationary in this last form some hundreds of years, which will be retained as long, probably, as the name is pronounced among men, and that will be as long as any name of man is pronounced, we may suppose. This final change of the name was made, perhaps, not less than three hundred years ago, as the Washingtons have long been well known in England, and some of them have been very distinguished men. Sir Henry Washington achieved an honorable military reputation, fighting on the side of King Charles against the Parliament. In the year 1538, the manor of Sulgrave was granted to Lawrence Washington, of Gray's Inn, London. His grandson, Sir John, had many children, and among them John and Lawrencee, the first having been knighted by James the First. These two brothers emigrated to this country about the year 1659, the cause of their emigration being, Mr. Everett says, dissatisfaction with Cromwell's government. They came to Virginia, and settled in the county of Westmoreland, purchasing extensive landed estates ; and some of the land they purchased is yet owned by their descendants. General Washington was the great-grandson of the immigrant John. The immigrant Lawrence had numerous descendants, some of them distinguished men. Col. William Washington, so celebrated as a cavalry officer in the war of the Revolution, was one of them. Lund Washington, the General's agent, in whom he had unbounded confidence, was another ; also Col. John Washington, distinguished as an artillery

officer in the war with Mexico, 1846-47. Peter G. Washington, Esq., a member of our Society, is also a lineal descendant of the first Lawrence.

This brief statement is enough for a very brief Address, and is sufficient to give a general idea of General Washington's family. What I have stated is, I believe, accurate. I have not given any loose and unsupported conjectures, nothing vaguely traditional, and nothing legendary and unauthentic. Errors have been committed by Gen. Washington's ablest biographers. Mr. Sparks says that the only evidence of consanguinity between the first John and the first Lawrence was the name—a strange mistake for that industrious and conscientious writer to have committed. Mr. Irving calls the first Lawrence, *Andrew*—a very unaccountable misnomer, but a mere oversight, and of but little importance. It may be inferred, from all the genealogical researches, that in this country, at least, every genuine and *bona fide* Washington has for his ancestor William de Hertburn, and is of the blood of the *Father of his Country*. This is the result, as it has been laboriously and patiently worked out by heralds, historians and antiquaries. Schreeder's "Life and Times of Washington" being the latest work of the kind, is, perhaps, with respect to the early history of the Washington family, the most reliable.

General Washington was born in Westmoreland county, Virginia, February 22, 1732. His father was Augustine, son of Lawrence, and grandson of the first John. His mother was Mary Ball, a daughter of a most respectable Virginia family. She was a lady of great merit, of many virtues, and of superior good sense. She did not marry a second time, and by her tact, her vigilance and her prudence, supplied admirably the place of father to her son. It was at one time settled that young George should enter the British navy as a midshipman, under the auspices of Admiral Vernon, who was the friend of his oldest brother, Lawrence—his father's son by his first wife, who had served under the Admiral and General Wentworth at Carthagena, in South America—but his mother opposed the project, and

it was abandoned. It is needless to speculate much upon the dispositions of Providence, about which it is impossible to know anything without a revelation, and about which it is easy to imagine everything ; but still I somewhat persuade myself that she had been made an instrument for reserving her son for a much higher destiny—for the achievement of great actions that were to unite his name indissolubly with the independence and greatness of his country ;—not that I assume, however, that without him its independence could not have been achieved. I believe it could have been, and if not in 1781, in less than forty years afterwards. It will not be doing injustice though to the eminent, devoted and patriotic men of whom he was the associate and co-worker in the great cause, to say, that he was first in the cabinet, first in the field, and first in the confidence of the public.—I am not now imitating the famous sentence, not by me to be imitated, “First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his fellow-citizens.”

Under the superintendence of his wise, excellent and affectionate mother, Washington received a sound, plain English education, and no more,—the one best adapted, it may be, for those who are born to be great actors and achievers on the world’s wide theatre. Very few great scholars have been great warriors, great statesmen, or great sovereigns. It may be because they prefer academic shades and scientific pursuits to all the glories of the Senate, of the forum, or of the “tented field,” and in this they may have been wise. It is pleasant to recollect that in his youth, Washington essayed poetry, as well as prose, though to the first he gave but little of his time, or thoughts probably. He had a greater work before him than “to build the lofty rhyme,” which was to deliver his country from British tyranny, and with his glorious and never-to-be-forgotten coadjutors, to lay the foundations of a great empire.

In 1752, Washington was sent by the Governor of Virginia (Dinwiddie), as commissioner to the commander of the French troops that had penetrated the British territory from Canada, being instructed to remonstrate against the pro-

ceeding, and to gather all the information he could. This duty he performed in a very satisfactory manner. He found a French officer at a post fifteen miles from Lake Erie, who treated him courteously, but gave him no clue to the intentions of his chief, in Canada; refused to retire with his troops, saying that it was not his business to expound or to discuss treaties, but to obey the orders of his superior, the Marquis Du Quesne.—It required forty-one days of laborious traveling for Washington to reach a point about 560 miles from Williamsburg, Va.; a point that might now be reached in two days, such are the present facilities for traveling.

In 1754, Washington was despatched, with the rank of Colonel, to the western frontier, with a few hundred men, to repel any attempt of the French to penetrate into Virginia. He had just troops enough to make a show of war and to provoke it, but not enough to insure success. This expedition resulted in the battle of the Great Meadows, and the *capitulation* of Fort Necessity, which was more properly a *convention*; but the historians and biographers started with the wrong word, and it is now too late to displace it for the proper one. It is a capitulation when an army surrenders and becomes prisoners of war—a convention, when there is no surrender and no prisoners. Instead of becoming prisoners, Washington's soldiers left the fort with all the honors of war, and all the stores, except what they abandoned for want of means of transporting them. The surrender of the French General Dupont and his army to the Spaniards, in 1808, was a capitulation; Marshal Junot's agreement to evacuate Portugal, in the same year, with all his force, was a convention, there being no prisoners.

Washington acquired much experience of military matters in these expeditions, and came to be regarded as the first military man in the province, which he undoubtedly was. He soon joined the army commanded by General Braddock, and was present at his defeat near Fort Duquesne (Pittsburg.) He gave the General good advice, which was

disregarded. Had it been followed a victory would have been won instead of a disastrous defeat being sustained. Braddock was brave, and a good officer, but vain, self-confident, and inaccessible to good counsel, particularly when the counsellor was a provincial—a *buckskin*, as he regarded Washington.

Washington was soon appointed commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces, and commanded an expedition that was sent to the West, but being merely for defensive purposes, no battles were fought and no laurels gained. In his twenty-fourth year he accompanied General Forbes, who was sent to capture Fort Duquesne, a duty that was performed with very little loss—and hostilities being apparently at an end, he returned to Virginia, resigned his military commission, and dedicated himself to the pursuits of private life. In 1758 he married the widow Custis. She was young, beautiful and attractive, and the mistress of what was *then* a very large fortune, but in these extraordinary times, not large at all, when wealth is counted, not by millions only, but by tens and scores of millions. It is to be hoped that all this vast opulence rests upon a solid foundation, but I am sometimes a little apprehensive that there is a flaw somewhere, and that a portion of it may, at some not very distant day, be dispersed into thin air. May this not happen!

Washington now resided on his estate of Mount Vernon, to the cultivation of which he gave the most assiduous attention, yet serving frequently as a member of the House of Burgesses, and also as a vestryman of his parish. Whatever he undertook to perform he performed always promptly, punctually and well—a small office as well as a great one. In whatever situation he might be placed, he was always found to be equal to it. If deficient in the requisite knowledge at the start, which he rarely was, if ever, he soon acquired it, and soon came to know more than almost any other person. So it was in the Burgesses, and so it was everywhere. He must have learned with ease, or he could not have learned so much. His mode of life at Mount Ver-

non was the happiest known to man, probably, and he made the best and the most of it. He had much intercourse with his neighbors and friends, entertained many visitors, and entertained them hospitably, but without parade or ostentation. As a legislator, he was remarkable for his information and for his solid judgment, which commanded the respect and esteem of his co-legislators. His political bias was by no means of a strong Anglican tendency. His opinions, pursuits and associations prepared him to be naturally and inevitably, when time came for taking sides, hostile to the British policy, which was, in a few words, to conjure out of the provincial treasuries every penny that could be conjured, by the ministerial magicians, at London, and they wielded the magic wand with no little dexterity. But, after all, they were but short-sighted conjurers, as they themselves lived to see. They had the golden goose, but they could not be satisfied with a golden egg every day, so they put all to hazard and lost all.

But Washington, whilst giving himself up to agriculture, and to the cultivation of the amenities of social life, was, notwithstanding, a constant and a vigilant observer of everything of public concernment. He was always ready to accept any charge or to perform any duty that might be assigned him, if calculated to promote the public welfare. This useful and improving kind of life he pursued many years, and came thus to be, whilst yet a young man, the most capable, efficient and influential person in all the thirteen provinces. And he is an example of the kind of man that may be produced by a great share of good sense and prudence, united with untiring industry, watchful vigilance and exalted patriotism.

In the year 1760, the relations between the British provinces and the Home Government were of a very delicate character, and nothing but the most skilful handling could effect a peaceable solution of the various questions and difficulties pending. These difficulties increased, and the crisis became difficult and ominous. Two conventions met in Virginia, and Washington was a member of both. He

and George Mason framed jointly a set of resolutions, remarkable as being a clear and luminous exposition of the points at issue between the mother country and the provinces. They were the work of both, Mason being the draughtsman, without doubt.

Washington was now fairly arrayed in opposition to the British pretensions, and was elected a member of the Continental Congress with Patrick Henry and three others, whose names are well known in American history for their patriotic labors. In Congress his ability and firmness soon became manifest, though little given to making speeches, for which he seemed to have an aversion. He worked with the head and with the hand ; the tongue work he left to able and eloquent men, who were more at home than he in that specialty. Here it was that Patrick Henry made that memorable reply to the question : Who is the greatest man in Congress ? He answered : "If you speak of eloquence, Mr. Rutledge, of South Carolina, is by far the greatest orator, but if you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Colonel Washington is unquestionably the greatest."

In 1775, the second Congress assembled, of which Washington was a member. By this body he was unanimously chosen commander-in-chief of the Continental army, and it was a little remarkable that of all the members none were more earnest in their support of him than those from New England. Happy era that ! Sectional differences and geographical lines had not yet made us a divided, jealous, and discontented people. Patriotism and devotedness to the country's interest were not then determined by degrees of latitude and longitude. Truly then, there was no North, no South, but a united population, animated by one thought, one soul, one ambition, one interest, one object. On his election, Washington gave notice that he did not accept the high office conferred on him for its emoluments, and that he would receive no compensation for his services beyond his expenses, and he kept his word. He was certainly the first commander-in-chief of armies in modern times, I sup-

pose, who accepted the command, stipulating similar conditions. He rendered an account, finally, of his expenses, kept with his own hand, and in an exact and circumstantial manner. And surely his expenses amounted to a very moderate sum, considering his eminent position, and that he was about seven or eight years in the public service. But he practiced the same judicious economy when commanding the whole military force of the country, even when quasi-dictator, that he practiced in his own private affairs. He did not forget, in all his greatness, when exercising supreme authority, how the money he expended was raised—by severely taxing a people then ill-able to bear taxation. They paid—or if sometimes recalcitrant, it was because of their poverty, not of their will.

General Washington soon found, if he did not know it from the beginning, that he had accepted an office, of all others, the most difficult to discharge effectively, or to discharge satisfactorily, and, under the circumstances, one that was inconceivably embarrassing. He was commander-in-chief, but where were his armies? They had to be formed, and when and where there was a scarcity, if not absence, of almost all the elements essential to the organization of armies. There were men, but not enough of them; they were, in general, without military experience, and their previous habits of life were not favorable to the construction of what the Duke of Wellington called a “perfect machine,” meaning a perfectly disciplined army, as his was, he said, that he marched, in 1814, from Spain into France. They were brave and patriotic, but averse to long periods of service. Short enlistments were then, and have since ever been, the weak point of our military system. Of this General Washington complained, often enough and emphatically enough, to have produced a change for the better, but he could not accomplish much. The difficulty was not with the Congress, but was to be found in the ideas, in the habits and in the pursuits of the people. Not only were soldiers wanting, but arms were wanting, munitions of war, clothing, and last, though not least, that indispen-

sable *nerf de la guerre*—money. There was no quartermaster department, no commissariat, no medical staff—none that really deserved these names. Never before, perhaps, did any nation, in modern times, rush into a war with a powerful adversary, oppressed with so copious a “negative catalogue,” as Dr. Johnson called the absence of all things needful. Had the want of all these things been only temporary and removable, it had been well. But it was not so. It existed, chronically, from the beginning of the war to the end of it, nor could Washington, with all his power, his influence, his strong will, his energy, and his heart-stirring appeals ever succeed in constructing a perfect machine, in the sense of the “Iron Duke.” Why was this so? Were the people pusillanimous or disaffected, or indifferent? No; not by any means, as a rule. There were disloyalists, but not enough to vitiate the whole loaf—the whole body popular and politic. The secret, if it were a secret, was, that the people were generally poor, and, though brave and patriotic, did not possess the military instincts ascribed to the French. Then the government, the form of it I mean, was not one of the best for carrying on a war. It existed but by the consent of thirteen distinct provincial governments; had but little power, little consideration, and no prestige. Besides, the population was small, and scattered over a vast extent of country. The great distance between States and cities, the want of roads, which could scarcely be said to exist during the war, and long afterwards, were insurmountable obstacles in the way of collecting supplies and transporting them to the points where they were needed, and of concentrating troops rapidly. Had they been no better during the late war the struggle might have lasted twenty years. For the thirteen colonies, without a central government, without strength except in opinion, without armies, and without money, or with but little of it, to throw down the gauntlet to a powerful nation, the mistress of the seas, the ravager of India, and the terror of half the world, was an act of patriotic spirit and daring but seldom paralleled.

To give, in a brief address, a sketch that might be in some degree satisfactory, of the revolutionary war, is simply impossible. Nor is it necessary. You are all familiar, more or less, with the principal events, the strategic plans and combinations, the successes, the failures, and the part borne in it by General Washington. He was the soul of everything, animated everything, and looked to almost everything. He fought many battles—was sometimes victorious and sometimes defeated, but never so utterly that defeat became disaster, great enough to shake his resolution, to drive him into despondency, or make him bathe a jot of heart or hope. Such was the confidence universally reposed in him that Congress invested him with quasi-dictatorial powers for a limited term, although there was a strong prejudice in the minds of the people against military dictators, as was right; but they were willing to trust him, the only military man they would have trusted so far, though not the only one worthy of trust, by many. Never surely did a dictator act less dictatorially than he. With infinite reluctance did he do anything, or order anything to be done, for which there was not law, or overwhelming necessity, or palpable expediency. He neither abused his powers nor suffered others to act tyrannically and oppressively in his name. The great prerogative and protective writ of *Habeas Corpus* has been in existence almost two hundred years, and was the law of the land when the Continental Congress suspended it, if it was suspended; and when General Washington might have filled the prisons with *suspects*—suspected of disloyalty and of sympathizing with the royalists. There were more than enough of these, and multitudinous arrests might have been made with colorable cause—yet few were made. There was no persecution, no oppression, because the supreme power was in the hands of a just and law-reverencing man. And thus General Washington deserved as much laudation for what he did not do as for what he did. With him the liberty of the citizen was as inviolate when he was commanding thirty or forty thousand soldiers, whose duty it was to execute his orders

implicitly, be they just or unjust, as it was when civil chief of the country,—it was his duty to protect every citizen in his rights. We read of many dictators, but of none so undictatorial as this. When he laid down the dictatorship, he felt not like a man giving up power and authority, but as one relieved from an onerous and disagreeable responsibility.

Though omitting any remarks about Gen. Washington's plans and campaigns and battles during the war, I cannot forbear saying a few words about Valley Forge,—words familiar to all your ears. None of you, I imagine, however extensive your military or historic reading may have been, have met with anything more sickening and heart-rending than the details of the sufferings of Gen. Washington's army at that encampment, during the winter of 1777-78. I might except properly, perhaps, the retreat of the French from Moscow in the winter of 1812, when the freezing fugitives used the bodies of their dead comrades for fuel to keep up their camp fires; nor did they do this from insensibility or from brutality, but from extremity of suffering. The ten thousand Greeks, in the famous *Anabasis* of Xenophon, from Persia through Armenia to the Black Sea, suffered much; not as much, though, as the French did, nor as much as Washington's army at Valley Forge, where there was the most unheard-of destitution—want of everything that could be regarded as necessary to a soldier's comfort—his existence almost.—In my youth I conversed frequently with an old soldier who passed that winter at the Forge, and when through his narrative, I said I could not see how they endured so much, and rather wondered that the troops had not broken up and dispersed—not deserting—until better times. He said that what prevented them from doing so was the authority and influence of Washington, and the cause in which they were engaged; and that they would have suffered still more for that cause. But notwithstanding their terrible sufferings the troops were not demoralized, and as a rule were faithful to their engagements. Here we see what a good cause can do. It inspires the

soul, strengthens the arm, fortifies the heart, and enables a patriot soldier to bear more hardship than the human system was constructed to bear. Faithful and glorious soldiers! They suffered much, but they had their reward. They lived—the most of them—to see themselves and their country free, and those who fell, found a reward surpassing far in value all that human justice and human gratitude can bestow.

In 1781, Cornwallis was captured with his army at Yorktown, and with this brilliant *finale* closed the war. The campaign which led to this crowning success, planned by Washington and Lafayette and Counts Rochambeau and De Grasse, was as admirably conducted as it was admirably planned. History does not mention, I believe, any military event brought about by superior strategic ability, or finally achieved in a more heroic manner. Peace followed the capture; and here I must quote four lines from a British poet, Dr. Darwin. He sings like an American patriot.

“With patriot speed the quick contagion ran,
Hill lighted hill and man electrized man;
Her heroes slain, awhile Columbia mourn’d,
And crown’d with laurels, Liberty return’d.”

The independence of the thirteen American colonies was acknowledged by George the Third with a tolerably good grace, seeing that he was an obstinate and impracticable man. He said to Mr. Adams, who was the first American Minister sent to the Court of St. James, that he was the last to consent to the dismemberment of the British empire, but that he would be the first faithfully to observe the treaty of peace.

General Washington having lived to see the accomplishment of, and in a great measure to accomplish, that which had induced him to take up arms, resigned his commission and retired to Mount Vernon, which he had visited but once in six or seven years. Having turned his weapons of war into agricultural implements, he resumed with much alacrity his former civil pursuits. He had had much experience

of war, but it was not a profession that he had now in his mature years any predilection for, although in his youth, when he first heard the whistling of hostile bullets, he had said that it was music to his ear. Being asked, after he had heard a good deal of that music, if he had said so, he replied that if he had it was when he was young,—thus admitting and retracting, apparently.

At Mount Vernon, Washington led the same quiet, happy and industrious life he had led in former times. There he resided, having reached the age of fifty,—an age beyond the age of adventure and romance, but young enough for enjoyment of life and for its active pursuits. His occupations were, superintending his farms, corresponding with his army friends, receiving visits and dispensing a liberal hospitality ; enjoying, as a fine poet sings,—

“The mild majesty of private life,
Where honor’s hands effuse unenvied treasures,
And the snowy wings of innocence and peace
Protect the scene.”

In 1787 he was a member of the Convention which met to form a Constitution for “the people of the United States.” It was formed, and was not long afterwards amended, and may again be ; for although, perhaps, the best document of the kind then ever conceived by the mind and heart of man, yet it is not perfect, and being the work of fallible men, may never be ; still, although the framers of it were fallible as being human and finite beings, they were perfect in patriotism, in political integrity, and in good intentions.— He was elected first President of the United States, and having served the term of four years, was re-elected without opposition, and could have been a third time, but this he peremptorily declined ; thus giving an example seldom given by men in exalted stations, of retiring voluntarily from public life, which he did partly because he was tired of it, and partly to give an example to his successors of being satisfied with two terms ; and so cogent were his reasons for this, and such the force and influence of his opinions, that

no other President, if he desired a third term, has ever expressed the wish to have it. And so the example of the first President has been, *thus far*, as much respected as though it were a provision of the Constitution, as it should be, or better still, one term only for one man during his whole life. Could Washington have seen the *shadows of coming events*, I have no doubt he would have declined a second term.

For some time after the close of the war, it was considered not to be bad taste in England to villify Gen. Washington. Among his revilers was a lady possessing considerable poetical powers, which she employed on a work that she called a *Monody on the Death of Major Andre*, who was hung in the year 1780 as a spy, as every one knows, he being an accomplice and coadjutor of the traitor Arnold. The worst man escaped, the better was punished. I read the poem fifty or sixty years ago, and recollect a few of the lines. I quote them :

“For infamy with livid hand shall shed
Eternal mildews o'er his ruthless head.”

* * * * *

“Cowards only know
Persisting vengeance o'er a fall'n foe.”

The “ruthless hand” was Washington’s. He was the “coward” too ; Andre the “fall’n foe.”—Grave English historians have represented the execution of Andre to be a foul murder. But this venom and virulence soon wore themselves out, and the poets of the Billingsgate school rested from their labors, which soon ceasing to pay, they ceased to sing. That pure, high-minded, honorable and chivalrous man, Lafayette, came in for a share of the vituperation heaped upon General Washington’s head. This was because he was a Frenchman, which was a very good English reason in that day for any amount of vilification. This is all changed, and was changed long ago. No one now speaks in England, even, but with respect of those two illustrious men, and many venerate their memories and eulogize them.

It is known to everybody that Gen. Washington selected the site of this city, under an act of Congress passed 1790, and that he superintended the surveying of it and laying it out. This duty he performed as he performed all others—punctually and conscientiously. One of our members, Mr. Wells, was of the surveying party acting under the orders of the General. This city has long enjoyed the *sobriquet* of the “city of magnificent distances.” Since these distances have been filling up rapidly within the last five or six years, I have not often heard the *sobriquet*. It has been objected to, the plan of the city, that the avenues and streets are too wide, thus making it very expensive to pave them. They seem wide now, but will not be two wide a quarter of a century hence. They are the better for their width, thus promoting the circulation of the air, and contributing to the healthfulness of the city; and the money expended in paving is really and effectively an expenditure for sanitary purposes and precautions. Edmund Burke said long ago, that the squares and open places of London were its lungs; a truth with which all Londoners are conversant, and there they only regret that the streets are not wider than they are. In all great cities they are too narrow, as they well know in all the old capitals of Europe, and as they begin to find out in New York and some other of our cities.

In his final retirement to Mount Vernon, General Washington applied himself sedulously and *con amore* to agricultural avocations. He aimed at improving the agriculture of his native State, which then much needed improvement. In those days of dull routine, there was no deep ploughing with patent ploughs, no systematic rotation of crops. Chemistry had not then given a helping hand to the agriculturist; it was but in its infancy itself. There were then no Liebigs and other chemico-agricultural writers and experimenters. There were then no reaping and mowing machines, and indeed scarcely one of the now numerous appliances and auxiliaries to mere human and horse and ox labor. Washington corresponded freely with persons engaged, like himself, in ameliorating the art of cultivating

the soil. Among his correspondents were Arthur Young and Sir John Sinclair, enlightened and public spirited Englishmen engaged in endeavoring, like him, to make two blades of grass grow where but one blade grew before.

As General Washington had ever led a temperate, prudent and active life, it might have been rationally supposed that he would have attained to an advanced age, as some of his successors have done—the two Adamses, Jefferson, Madison and Jackson. But Providence had disposed differently. Whilst visiting some of his farms in December, 1799, he was caught in a fall of snow and sleet, which caused inflammation of the throat, for which skilful physicians could do nothing, and on the 14th of that month he breathed his last. I well remember his death. I was then in Kentucky—and well remember, too, with what unmistakable manifestations of the profoundest grief the intelligence was received. At first the news was discredited, but “final hope became at last flat despair.” Honors were paid to his memory, such as the times and circumstances could afford. There were no gorgeous trappings and gilded canopies or plumed hearses, or “windy suspiration of forced breath,” or the “trappings and the suits of woe,” but there were suffused eyes and mourning hearts, and in the faces of the people it might be read, that the Father of his Country was no more.

Whilst Washington was in the full enjoyment of the kind of life he most loved—a rural one and practical farming—he was prevailed upon by President Adams to accept the command of a provisional army to be raised to meet any contingency of foreign war or of domestic troubles. His rule having always been not to seek offices or to refuse them when he could serve his country, he accepted again the office of commander-in-chief, with the rank of Lieutenant-General; but, fortunately for the country, it was not necessary for him to take the field. Devoted to peace as he was, he thought, as Pliny did, that war might be necessary, and was neither to be feared nor provoked.

When Rudolph of Hapsburg was elected Emperor of Ger-

many, in the thirteenth century, the electors gave as a reason for choosing him, that he was "just and good, and beloved of God and men"—just the reason that those who elected Washington to the highest office within the gift of the people, might have assigned for their choice, five hundred years after it had been applied to another great man.

Robertson, the historian, said of the elder Pitt: "The Secretary stood alone; modern degeneracy had not reached him." It cannot be said that General Washington "stood alone," seeing how numerous were the able and patriotic men who had acted with him in council and in the field, and whom he always regarded as his co-patriots and comrades. But degeneracy had not reached him, and, secure in his invulnerable integrity, he was beyond its reach.

Washington's *Farewell Address* to his countrymen is a noble legacy. He cautions them against the baneful effect of the spirit of party generally; tells them that one method of assault against the Constitution might be through alterations, which will impair the energy of the system. He warns against factions and factious men; he exhorts us to cherish public credit as a source of strength and security; to cultivate peace and harmony with all,—supposes that a nation's felicity is in ratio with its virtue, but fears that national vices may be too strong.

I need say no more about the Address. We all know its value and the wisdom that dictated it, as well as the love of country of him from whom it emanated. It is better understood, I fear, and more admired than it has been observed.

There has lived no mortal, whose name is historical, that will be heard of in future, and in all future ages, oftener than General Washington's. In Europe and in South America his name is the greatest known. In the latter he is regarded as the great liberator—*libertador*—of the North, and they hold him in the highest veneration, although they cannot pronounce his name, *Vasintone* being the nearest they can come to it. In less than two hundred years, among three hundred millions of people of Anglo-Saxon origin,

his name will be a daily and a household word. This must be so, and nothing but the will of God that it shall not be, can prevent it. The territory is here, the people are here, and will come. We have a free press, and free institutions that cannot be destroyed, even by armed despotism itself. We have the industry, the energy, the enterprise, the science and the ingenuity. Wars and rebellions, and dismemberment even, cannot prevent this glorious consummation. Let none doubt. The population of the United States has doubled itself about three and a half times within about ninety years. Why then may it not double itself three times in two hundred years? Statistical tables show that this may be done. Circumstances indicate that it will be done—*Deo favente.*

In conclusion, I will remark, that it seems to me pertinent to say that, looking recently over the records of the Washington National Monument Society, I observed a letter from the Secretary of the Villa Rica (Georgia) Masonic Lodge, requesting that some Monument engravings might be sent to him, which were supplied by John Carroll Brent, Secretary of the Monument Society. The Secretary of the Lodge, in his reply, returns thanks for the engravings, and says that “the sentiments of the letter from the Washington correspondent (Mr. Brent) meet a cordial response in their bosoms, and we earnestly trust that the good day is not far distant when we shall all meet as brothers of the same family, never, no never, again to meet in deadly strife.”

It does not seem to me to be inappropriate now to reproduce these sentiments for imitation and approval, for, although they are not *per se* of any very impressive moment, still, as a precursory sign and symptom, they may have no small significance and value.



A D D R E S S.

Subject:

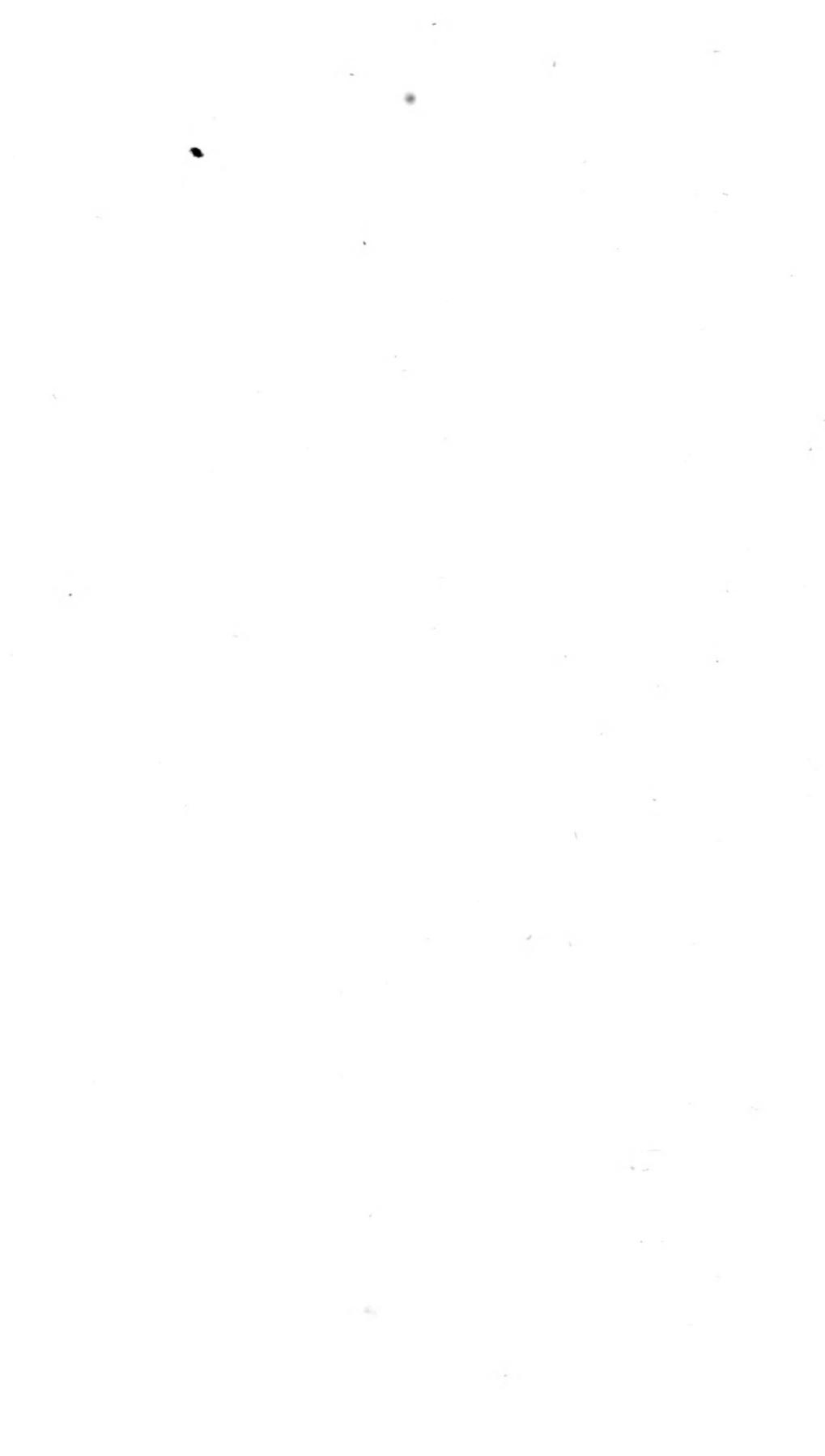
GENERAL WASHINGTON.

For February 22, 1867.

B. V.

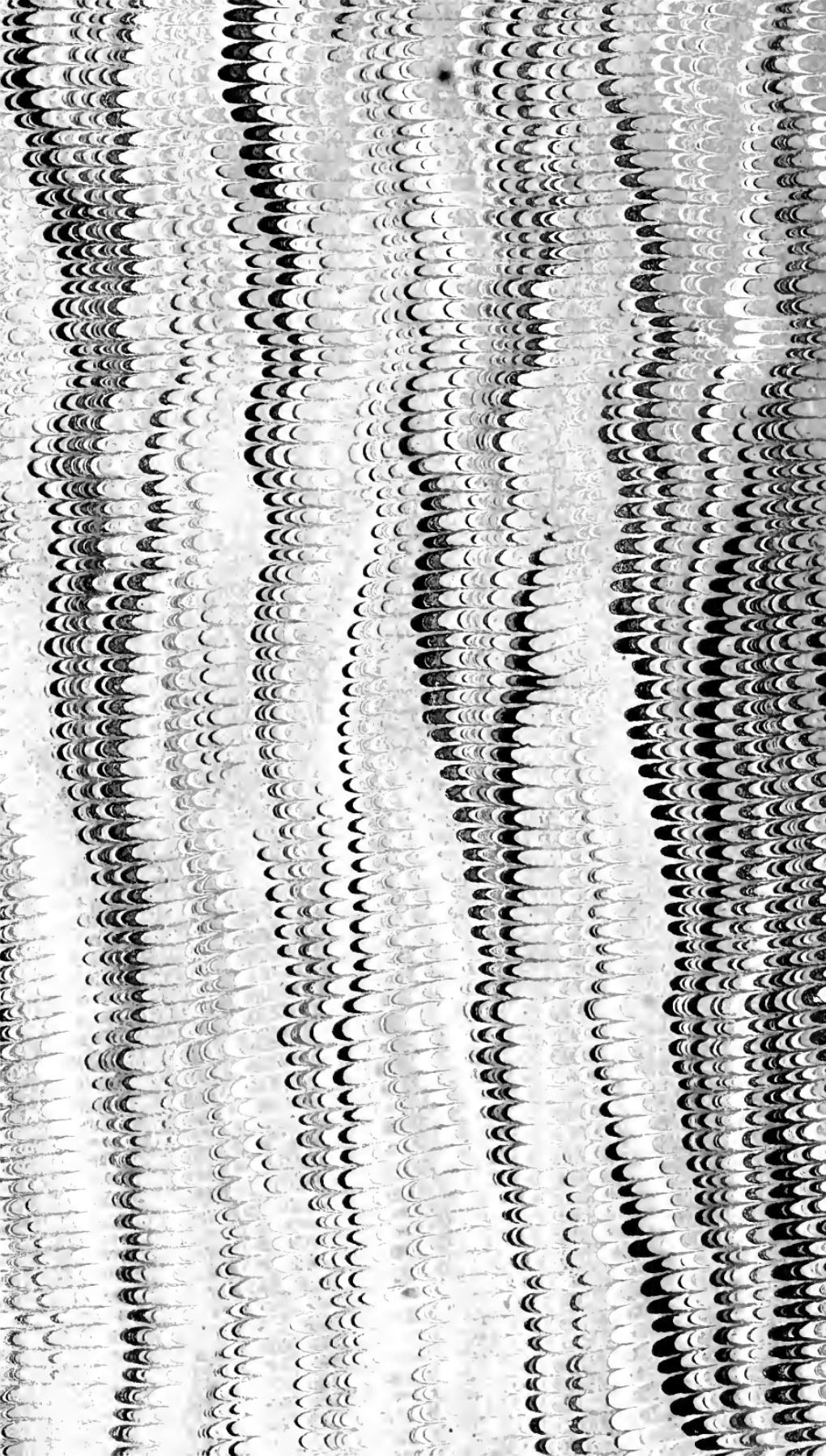
Col. J. C. PICKETT.

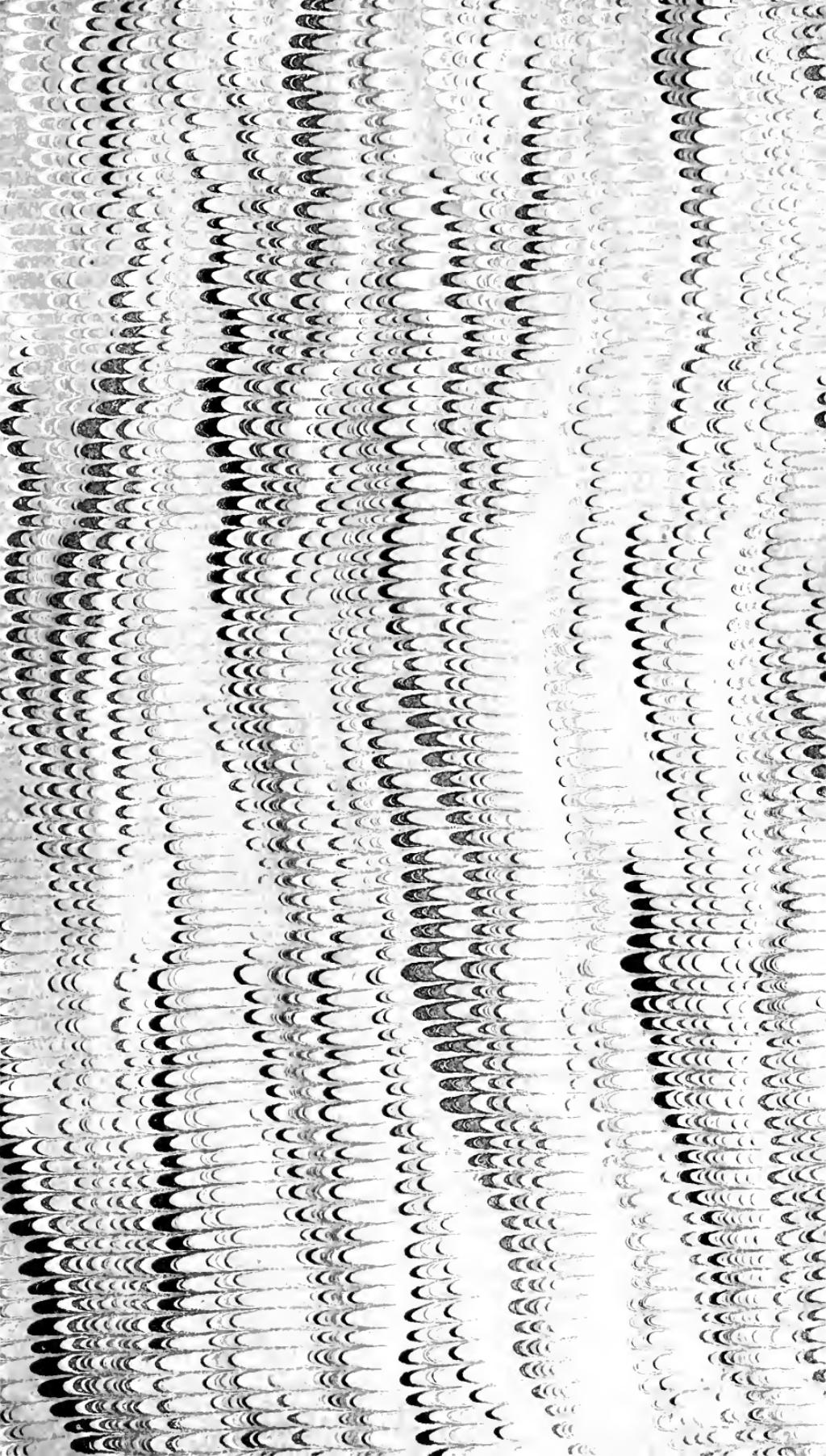
WASHINGTON:
PRINTED BY JOHN T. BURCH,
1867.











00117120144



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS